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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 000816

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANOTHER WEST BANK AMCIT SETTLER'S ACCOUNT

Ref: (A) TEL AVIV 000346

11. (SBU) On 24 Jan 2005 Conoff spoke with an American citizen resident of the West Bank settlement of Elkana. The American citizen was at the Embassy in Tel Aviv renewing the U.S. passports of her children and was willing to discuss the subject of life in Elkana.

12. (SBU) The American citizen is the mother of five U.S. citizen children. Her husband is an Israeli. Two months ago, the family moved from Jerusalem to the West Bank settlement of Elkana. Elkana is located about four kilometers east of the Green Line and due east of Tel Aviv. She said the settlement has a population of about 750 families.

13. (SBU) When asked why the family chose to move to a settlement at this time, she cited pragmatic reasons nearly identical to those cited by the subject of reftel A. She said the family could afford a large house with a yard in Elkana, whereas in Jerusalem, they could only afford a small apartment. Again, as did the subject of reftel A, she pointed approvingly to the close communal atmosphere of the settlement and cited the "quality people" of Elkana, most of whom, she said, are college graduates. (Comment: The observation that settlement residents are "nice" is a recurring one. One American citizen resident of the West Bank settlement Karnei Shomron compared these communities to small towns in the American mid-west.)

14. (SBU) Furthermore, she said that Elkana has all the conveniences one might expect in a developed Israeli town, including a big supermarket and an excellent public library. Echoing the sentiment of the subject in reftel A, she said that Elkana is a suburb of Tel Aviv, with convenient access to the new north-south toll road, Highway 6. Evidently in an effort to emphasize this point, she professed not to be certain that Elkana is indeed east of the Green Line at all. Elkana is, however, on the Israeli side of the separation barrier, a fact that she acknowledged is very important to her. She is worried that the route may be altered to Elkana's detriment.

15. (SBU) A significant advantage to life in Elkana, in her opinion, is the quality education her children receive in the settlement schools. She said the religious schools her children attend are publicly funded and "always better" than secular public schools.

16. (SBU) She denied having personal ideological reasons for moving to Elkana. Her husband, on the other hand, was primarily motivated by ideology. Her husband and children faithfully attend anti-disengagement protests and rallies. She said the Elkana schools provide the children with free busing to these events.

KURTZER